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NEWS RELEASE

NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION
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STATEMENT BY JAMES E. WEBB, ADMINISTRATOR
NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION
ON THE OCCASION OF THE AWARDING OF
THE GODDARD MEMORIAL TROPHY

Probably more than any other man, Robert R. Gilruth is responsible for the success of Project Mercury. From its inception, three and a half years ago, this great engineer has had charge of the design and development of the spacecraft, the adapting of the launch vehicle, and the creation of operational methods of flight, worldwide communications, and the safe recovery of the spacecraft and its pilot.

Under his direction, the Mercury team has become a symbol of dedicated people working together toward a common objective. The work has been characterized by soundness in engineering approach, thorough testing and checkout, and a fundamental belief that the astronaut should function as an integral part of a manned space flight system.

On February 20, President Kennedy paid tribute to the Project Mercury team and all those who took part in the orbital flight of John Glenn. "They faced many disappointments and delays," the President declared, "--the burdens on them were great--but they kept their heads and made a judgment, and I think their judgment has been vindicated."

Such words particularly apply to Robert R. Gilruth.